

writing



Writing

Most teachers accept that children learn to read by reading. It is equally important that children learn to write by writing.

Writing will not develop simply by asking children to write. For many children the process of recording experiences or feelings will be quite new to them especially if they have had little exposure to books or print. Talking about experiences, drawing them or reading about them will provide critical links to children's understanding of how language can be recorded through writing. To make these connections children need to be involved in writing and reading within a writing and reading environment.

Developing Writing Skills

1. Let the Children See You Writing

Write in front of the children every day. Include incidental writing such as preparing the chalkboard or writing signs or labels for wall displays. These activities provide valuable interaction with the children and allow the teacher to demonstrate writing in all its forms.

More formal activities might include daily 'news' or diaries. Talking through the process helps children to understand that writers have to make decisions, think about what they are doing and be prepared to make and learn by their mistakes.



2. Write Together

Each day write a text with the children, e.g. a shared experience about cooking. Engage the children in talking, writing and reading about the topic. Initially the writing shouldn't be too complicated. Concentrate on producing a couple of sentences together:

How will I start? Do I need a capital letter? I'm at the end of the line. Where should I write the next word? That's a difficult word. Is it written anywhere in the room?

This procedure involves the children as writers since they are helping to make decisions about the content and organisation of the text. Their participation in the activity will also assist them to re-read the final copy with greater accuracy.

Include prediction activities that assist the children to make logical links between what has been recorded and what might follow. For children who need language support nominate the topic:

I'm going to write about our trip to Darwin.



3. Encourage Independent Writing

Have an expectation that children will write. Provide a range of materials that will entice them to experiment and record their understandings in print.

If children have not had experience in writing before:

- Provide a print-rich environment.
- Allow the children to experiment with a range of media - paint, crayons, pens, pencils. For these children writing involves two elements: *What to write and how to write.*
- Include writing in language experience activities, e.g. set up a shop and have the children watch as you make signs. Provide extra cards for the children to 'write' their own signs.

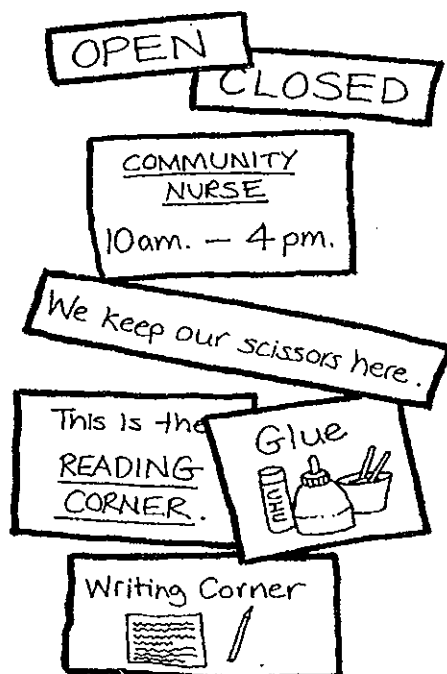
Early Stages of Writing (First Steps)

Role Play writing: writer emulates adult writing by experimenting with marks to represent language.

Experimental writing: writer is aware that speech can be written down.

Early writing: writer produces a small range of texts that exhibit some of the conventions of writing.

Transitional writing: writer shows increasing control over the conventions of writing such as punctuation, spelling and text organisation.



4. Assist ESL Students

If the children are grappling with two languages, i.e. thinking in one language and attempting to express themselves in English, assist the writing process by scribing the children's stories:

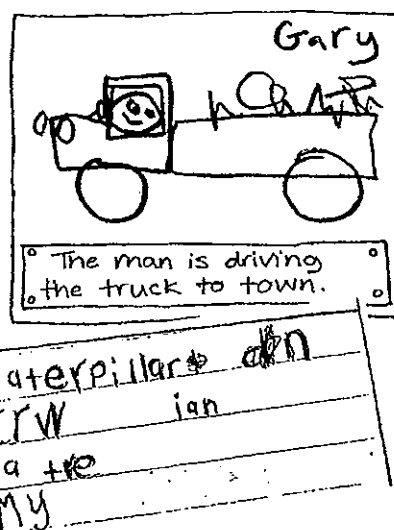
You've drawn a big 4-wheel drive. What's the man doing?

Discuss the illustration with the child and assist in generating English language patterns:

The man is driving the truck to town. Watch while I write the story for you.

In this situation the teacher is helping the child to express the idea in English and is also demonstrating how the oral form can be recorded in print.

Enhance this support with opportunities for the child to 'have-a-go' at writing independently. In the early stages of writing, this may involve random marks, a mixture of letters and numbers, or attempts to copy print found in the classroom. All of these behaviours are important milestones in the child's development of writing and should be encouraged as part of the learning process.



Print in the environment

Signs in role play area.

OPEN

CLOSED

COMMUNITY NURSE
10 am. - 4 pm.

SPECIALS
5c
10c

Include labels
on shelves in the
class shop.



Table with pens and paper
for writing shopping lists and appointments.

Signs around room for
providing information.

We keep our scissors here.

WRITING CORNER



This is the
READING
corner.

GLUE



Ring a friend.



Letter writing area.



Cardboard holders
with children's names.

Put your letters here

| | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| Ted | Ann | Peter |
| Matt | Joe | Tess |
| Bill | Sally | Lee |

REMEMBER:

Please wash your
hands after
LUNCH.

CLEAN YOUR
TEETH

SCHOOL TRIP
TO DARWIN
Will be leaving on
Saturday 15th March
and returning on
Saturday 16th March

Notes for children
to give to parents.

Use whole sentences
for signs.

Put your reading books here.

This is the reading corner.

Display children's writing
and items of interest.

OUR NOTICE BOARD

Look at our
writing.

We took photographs
at Darwin.



Model writing forms.

Modelled Writing

Children learn language more effectively in an environment which provides demonstrations of how language is used. Just as reading to children demonstrates reading behaviour, so writing in front of children models writing behaviour. One of the best ways for teachers to help children with writing is to engage them as the audience while you write for them every day.

Modelled writing involves the teacher composing texts in front of the class, thinking aloud about what is being done and explaining decisions a writer has to make. The process provides children with the opportunity to see an experienced writer in action. It enables them to observe and understand how writers choose topics, plan, draft, edit, use conventions or structure different texts. It also helps children to make the links between oral and written language and provides teachers with a tool for identifying gaps in children's understanding.

What Does Modelled Writing Offer?

Modelled writing presents many opportunities for teachers to demonstrate forms of writing, processes or conventions across the curriculum. These demonstrations may include:

- **how different texts are structured**

- recounts
- descriptions
- reports
- summaries
- letters
- invitations
- advertisements
- timetables
- narrative
- poems

- **processes of writing**

- selecting a topic
- planning
- organising information
- sequencing
- developing a logical structure
- researching
- altering text
- drafting
- proofreading
- editing devices

- **conventions**

- left-to-right
- top-to-bottom
- spaces between words

Modelled Writing

The skills demonstrated during sharing and modelling will also assist children to develop an understanding of:

- (a) spelling as it 'sounds', e.g.
 - man m-a-n
 - the 's' sound may be represented by s as in sun or c as in rice.
- (b) spelling as it 'looks' e.g.
 - *ought not ought*
 - *elp not epl*
- (c) sentences
- (d) spelling strategies
- (e) punctuation
- (f) selecting vocabulary
- (g) grammar



Planning for Modelled Writing

Resources

Chalkboard, whiteboard, easel or butcher's paper

Organisation

Small group or whole class

Procedure

When modelling any process, form of writing or convention ensure that the children are also exposed to a range of completed forms, either commercial or class-made. For example, a narrative structure should be modelled while the children are encountering narrative texts as part of their language program. The same is true for expository or non-fictional texts where the structure and organisation of the text can be as important as the content.

1. Choose a focus

This decision may be based on observations made during children's independent writing or from information gained from writing samples:

- *What do the children already know*, eg spaces between words, writing from left to right, capital letters?
- *What needs to be practised*, eg full stops, sentences?
- *What needs to be consolidated*, eg past tense form: ed?
- *What do I need to model?*
 - a process, eg sequencing
 - ideas a form, eg a recount
 - a convention, eg sentences
- Provide a variety of experiences which have a common basis and purpose for writing. For example, link a modelled recount into a community trip or class excursion. Alternatively, demonstrate a letter format which can be used when writing to a friend or parent. As well, consider compiling lists as part of the preparation for a school camp or cooking activity.

When planning a writing program choose experiences which are purposeful, relevant and which motivate or challenge the children to learn.

2. Writing with the Children

- Introduce the focus through a topic or activity which will arouse the children's interest:

We are going to do some cooking today. I'm going to write a recipe so we can remember what to do.

- Demonstrate how writers plan before they write:
 - choose a recipe
 - make a list of ingredients
 - make a list of utensils
 - talk with others
 - think
- During this stage model headings, notes, brainstorm, etc.

3. Writing the Text

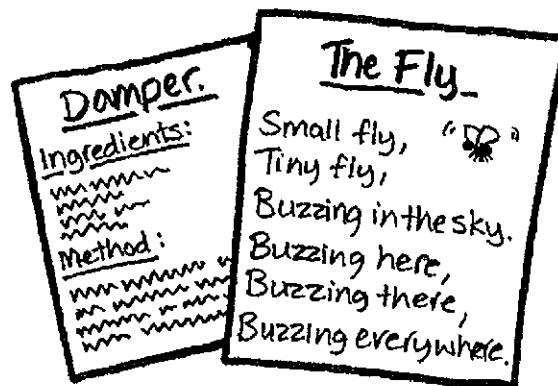
Share the writing experience with the children, thinking aloud as you write. In addition, involve them through talking, questioning and reading:

I've got a heading for ingredients. I'm going to make a list underneath. Look at the food on the table and help me choose what to write... First I'll write '2 eggs'. I'll write the number 2, not the word. That's how we write recipes.

If the children are beginning readers or are unfamiliar with the vocabulary, add illustrations to support the text.

4. Reading the Text

- Read the finished text together. Compare the product with similar forms, e.g. other recipes (procedures). As well, compare the text organisation with different forms, e.g. a narrative or letter. Comparing and contrasting different forms allows children to make judgments about content, structure and organisation of texts.



Having a Purpose for Writing

Writing needs to be meaningful and should incorporate all curriculum areas - maths, science, social studies, health, music, etc.

- Write letters or cards and send them through the post or class letter box.
- Write procedures then test them, e.g. by following a recipe.
- Design and display posters to advertise or target school-related interests, e.g. health or environmental issues.
- Write and publish poems and stories.
- Write captions to explain class displays.
- Write charts of songs and use them during class sing-alongs.

When children can see that writing is relevant to them, they will take more responsibility for their own learning. They will see a purpose for spelling, punctuation and grammar. They will also see the connections between speaking, writing and reading as tools for communicating and learning in the classroom.

Modelled Writing Activities

The following activities engage children in a shared writing experience while exposing them to the patterns and structures of the English language, both oral and written.

• Daily Writing

Write a daily diary in front of the children. Before writing, encourage some of the children to recount their experiences. If children are unfamiliar with the elements - *when, who, where, what, why*, provide a framework for organising the information. For example, provide 'key word' headings then add each element of information.

| WHEN | WHO | WHERE | WHAT | WHY |
|--------|------|-------|---------|--------|
| Monday | John | bush | hunting | hungry |

Model how to use the information to produce a simple recount:

On Saturday we went to Wiluna to see my friends. We went for a party.

The children can use the same framework for planning, telling or writing their own recounts.

| WHEN | WHO | WHERE | WHAT | WHY |
|----------|----------|--------|-------------|-------|
| Saturday | me Billy | Wiluna | see friends | party |

Use the diary activity to model how to:

- write more than one sentence
- correct spelling mistakes
- find words around the classroom, eg days of week in dictionaries or on charts
- use more interesting vocabulary
- edit
- proof read

4.9.91
 Yesterday I went
 to Charlie Carters
 and I saw the things
 We got balloons
 and there was a
 dog and I caught
 it was fun

Modelling Different Forms

Model a simple letter or note. Explain the purpose of the activity, e.g. inviting another class to visit. Show and discuss examples of a similar form so that children develop an understanding that both the content and the organisation of the text need to be considered.

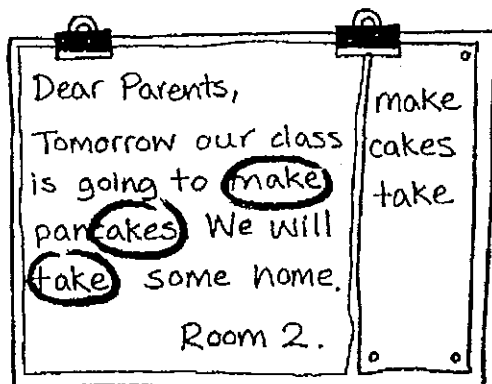
Select a focus, eg, the teacher may wish to consolidate the children's use of full stops:

*That's one idea. I'll need to put a full stop here.
Now I'm starting another idea. I'll start with a capital letter.*

As the children read and re-read the text demonstrate how reading can assist them in deciding where the full stops are placed:

I had a little rest after that word. That tells me I will probably need a full stop.

Use the sample of writing to introduce other skills, eg. spelling, rhyming words. If the writing has been completed on a large sheet of butcher's paper, simply overlay with a sheet of clear plastic and add or circle words with a water soluble pen.



Providing a focus for narrative writing

Display a picture which can provide a setting for a story - no people or animals. Ask the children to draw some characters which might be suitable for the story. Select a couple of the characters and brainstorm features.

Model how to use the setting and characters to generate a story.

WHERE *Where do Larry and Sammy live?
I'm going to write about their home.*

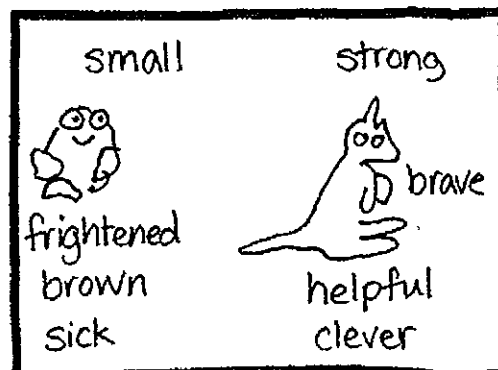
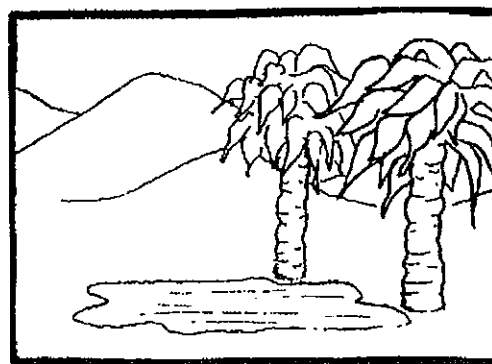
WHO *Who is going to be in the story?
What are they like? I'll write a description of them. What words should I use?*

WHEN *When is the story going to happen? Look at the picture. Will that help?*

WHAT *What are Larry and Sammy going to do?*

WHY *Why did they get a fright? What will they do?*

At first compose simple narratives which demonstrate a setting, characters and event or events. In addition, read a range of narratives which help the children to make links between story structure in recorded texts and their own writing.



• Using Illustrations

Picture-related activities provide many opportunities for modelling writing:

- **Story maps** Add labels or speech balloons.
- **Sequenced pictures** (i) Add main idea under each picture. (ii) Write one sentence about each picture. (iii) Rewrite the sentences to produce a logically sequenced narrative.
- **Life-cycles** e.g. frog. Write labels, descriptions of each stage, or an explanation of the life cycle.
- **Time-lines** e.g. silkworm. Write labels, descriptions or explanations.
- **Pictorial graphs** Use writing to record the information:
 - Three people like honey sandwiches.
 - Four people like peanut butter sandwiches.
 - Ten people like ham sandwiches.



To provide practice in and consolidate story-writing skills, introduce and demonstrate some of the following activities.

- Make a sequence of 4 pictures to illustrate the modelled story. Ask the children to:
 - arrange them in order and write a sentence about each
 - select one picture and write what is happening
 - add speech balloons
 - use the sequenced pictures to draw and label a story map
- Reproduce the story text and organise it into 'blocks' of meaning. Have the children refer to the original version either during or after the activity.

Each of the above activities involves an understanding of story structure and requires children to record their understandings in different ways, e.g. story maps, importance of talking through and demonstrating each skill. It is critical that the children have an opportunity to watch you first before attempting to work independently.

This modelling strategy is invaluable in teaching children how to comprehend both the content and the organisation of different forms of writing.

One day the little old woman - - -

The gingerbread man ran out the door and - - -

"Come back!" shouted the little - - -

The horse and the cow - - -

The gingerbread man - came - - -

Language Patterns

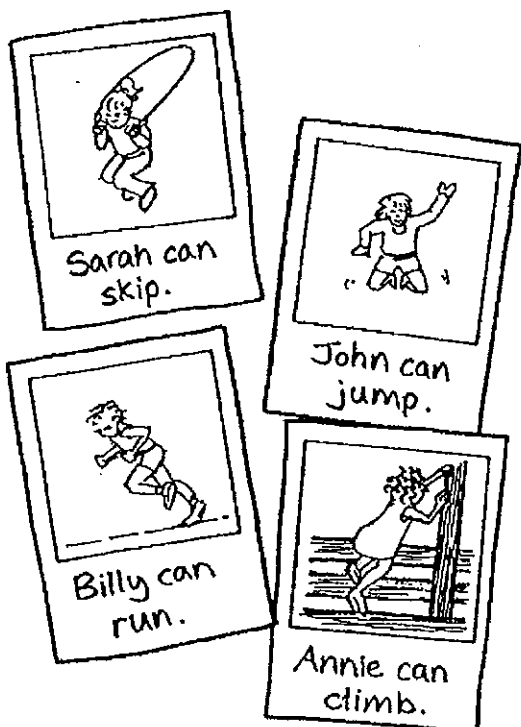
Link the following activities into Social Studies themes, e.g. 'Me' or 'My Family' so that vocabulary is practised in a range of contexts.

Present a simple pattern, e.g. *Babies can - Babies can't*. Make headings on a large sheet of paper.

| BABIES CAN | BABIES CAN'T |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Babies can cry. | Babies can't run. |
| Babies can crawl. | Babies can't read. |
| Babies can burp. | Babies can't talk. |
| Babies can laugh. | Babies can't write. |

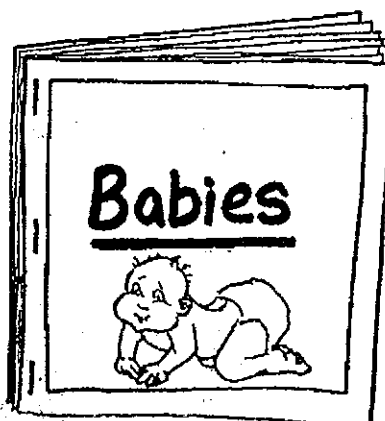
Involve the children in the discussion and talk through your decisions on:

- **Headings** It's easier to see what babies can and can't do.
- **Full stops and capital letters** Do we need them in a list?
- **Deleting some items** Let's look through the lists and decide on eight items.

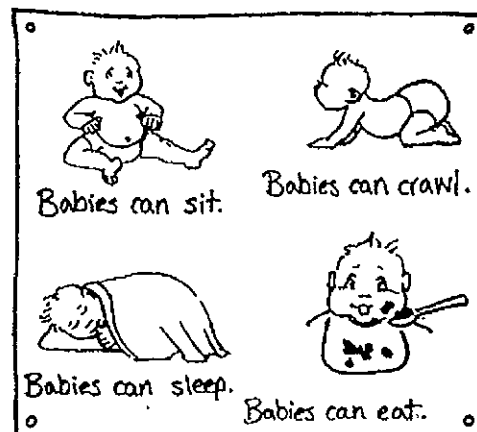


Follow-up Activities

- Make a class book with each child contributing a sentence and picture.
- Demonstrate contraction *can't* for *cannot*. Start a class chart of contractions.
- Make a class book of actions the children can do. Take photos and add the text:
- John can jump.
- Sarah can skip.
- Display photos of babies and add the action words, e.g. 'A baby can crawl!' 'A baby can walk'



| | | |
|------------|---|-----------|
| cannot | → | can't |
| will not | → | won't |
| he is | → | he's |
| she is | → | she's |
| have not | → | haven't |
| should not | → | shouldn't |



report

OBJECTIVES:

- To write a short, factual report.
- To introduce language appropriate to the form.

EXAMPLES:

- Scientific Reports.
- Some newspaper or magazine reports.

REPORT FRAMEWORK:

| |
|---|
| REPORT |
| CLASSIFICATION What is it? |
| DESCRIPTION What attributes does it have? (size, shape etc.) |
| LOCATION Where/When is it? (time/place) |
| DYNAMICS What does it do? |
| SUMMARY |

EXAMPLE:

The Crocodile

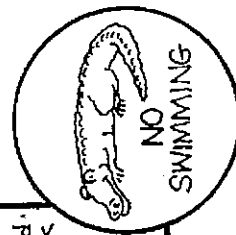
The crocodile is a reptile.

The crocodile has a long, low body, short legs and a powerful tail. It has a tough hide, a long snout and sharp teeth.

This reptile lives in tropical countries throughout the world.

Crocodiles eat many small animals such as fish, birds and turtles. Sometimes they attack large animals and people.

The crocodile is part of a large and ancient group of reptiles.

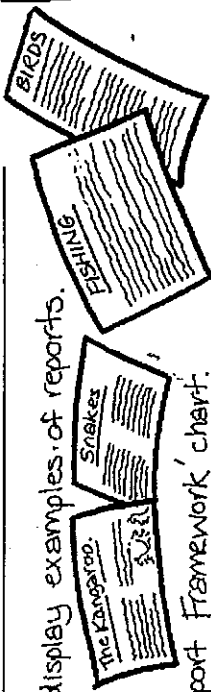


NOTES FOR TEACHERS:

- Teach report writing within a familiar context: eg. After a bush walk or excursion.
- Include shared reading sessions of commercial and class-produced reports.
- Model how to write reports.
- Follow modelled writing with shared writing where the teacher and class compare texts.
- Display the Report Framework as an aid to independent writing.

TEACHING THE REPORT FRAMEWORK:

1. Present and display examples of reports.
2. Display a 'Report Framework' chart.
 - a) Provide an example of a report and have children identify main features.
 - b) Have children reconstruct a text from jumbled paragraphs. Use the 'Report Chart' to assist in organisation of sentences.



3. Play 'what am I?' or 'who am I?' games.

Write the name of an object on a card. Children establish information about the object by devising and asking questions from the framework.

e.g.

What size are you?
What shape are you?
How big are you?
Where do you live?
What do you do?

snake honey ant

Monitor childrens use of language and introduce relevant English vocabulary and language patterns.

4. Model report writing a number of times before asking the children to write independently.

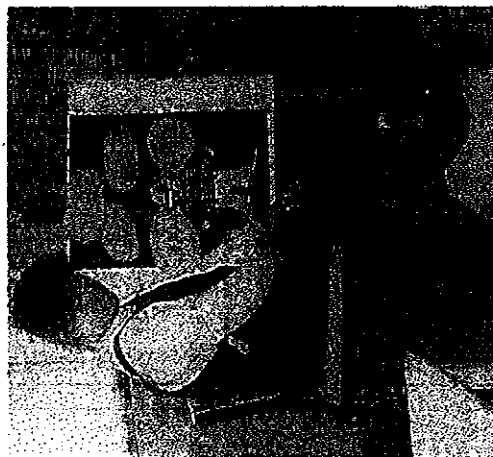
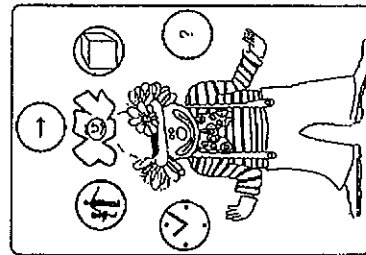
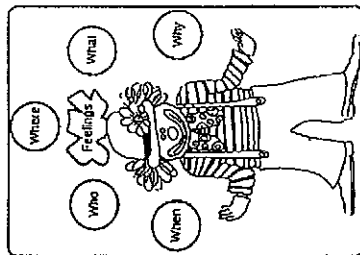
Reference: First Steps Project.

'Teaching Children How To Write Informational Texts.'

Recount: newstelling

1. THE NEWS FRAMEWORK

- Provide a framework, eg. when, who, where, what, why. Simplify by adding or deleting elements with cards & blue-tack/velcro.
- Use symbols for children who have difficulty reading.
- Model the newstelling format until the children are familiar with the procedure and language patterns.



PLANNING FOR NEWS

| My News Plan | | | |
|--------------|------|--------|-------|
| When? | Who? | Where? | What? |
| | | | |
| | | | 500 |

- Assist planning by drawing each element of the news. Encourage children to plan and practise first, then tell the news without referring to the drawings.
- Model the procedure before asking the children to work independently.
- Allow practice in telling news and identifying the components, eg. 'We need to know 'when' and 'who' about our news.'

Reference: 'First Steps' module. — 'Literacy-related Skills.'

3. LINKING INTO WRITING

| When | Who | Where | What | Why |
|-------------|-----------|---------|--|-----------------------|
| on Tues day | Myranda I | at home | Slater bug caterpillar gave it Belinda | because she wanted it |

- Write 'key words' on a 'news plan'. Use the plan to generate a written recount.
- Write news items using the 'news plan'.



procedure

OBJECTIVES:

- To write an outline of steps, stating how something is done.
- To introduce language appropriate to the form.

EXAMPLES:

- Recipes
- Scientific experiments.
- Instruction manuals.

TEACHING THE PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK:

1. Discuss and display examples of procedures.



2. Display a 'Procedure Framework' chart.

- Prepare an example of a procedure and use the framework to identify the main features.
- Have the children reconstruct the text from jumbled sections. (e.g. of a recipe.)

EXAMPLE:

RECIPE FOR COOKING: PIRELETS.

GOAL/AIM:

REQUIREMENTS:

UTENSILS

- Frypan
- Beaker
- Mixing Bowl
- Spatula
- Spoon
- Cup

INGREDIENTS

- 2 eggs
- 4 tbsps sugar
- pinch salt
- 8 tbsps S.R. flour
- 1 cup milk
- margarine

METHOD

- Beat eggs well.
- Add sugar and beat again.
- Add flour and milk. Mix well.
- Drop in spoonful on hot, greased pan.
- Cook until they bubble on top and are brown underneath.
- Turn and cook on other side.

STEPS

EVALUATION/TESTING

* Eat with a variety of toppings: jam, honey, lemon juice, sugar.

PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK:

PROCEDURE

GOAL/AIM

What is to be done?

REQUIREMENTS

What is needed?

- utensils/tools/equipment.
- ingredients/parts.

STEPS

First step to last step.

- What is to be done?
- How is it to be done?

EVALUATION/TESTING

Was the goal achieved?

3. Include a variety of activities related to e.g. cooking or using a computer.

Model procedures as part of the session. Refer to the framework when recording relevant information. Monitor the children's use of language and introduce appropriate vocabulary and language patterns.

4. Follow modelled writing with shared writing, where the teacher and class compose the text together.

5. Display the Procedure Framework as an aid to independent writing.

Reference: First Steps Project.

'Teaching Children How To Write Informational Texts.'

description

OBJECTIVES:

- To write a short, factual description.
- To introduce language appropriate to the form.

PROCEDURE:

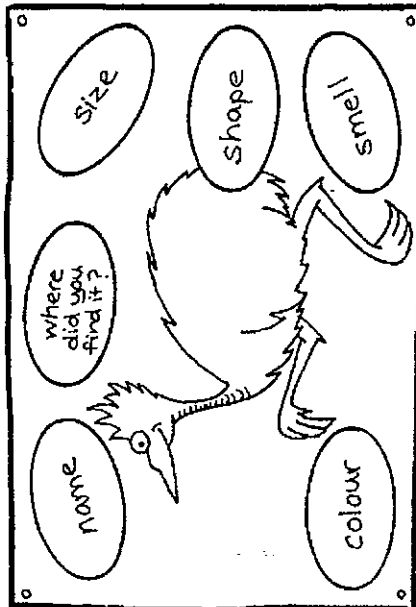
1. ORAL

- Display a description chart and discuss suitable attributes e.g. size, colour, shape, texture. Attach attribute cards and additional information which needs to be obtained. e.g. where did you find it? This planning process helps the children to focus on the attributes of the item and the language needed to describe it.
- Collect or view the item. e.g. leaves, fruit, food.
- Discuss features using the key words displayed on the chart. Monitor the children's language and introduce new vocabulary and language patterns.
- Model a description of the item. e.g. 'I found some leaves by the school gate. They're eucalyptus leaves. They're long and green. They're bigger than the other leaves near the school. They have a smell if I crush them.'
- Encourage the children to plan and present an oral description to a small group or a partner.

2. WRITTEN

- Brainstorm information obtained during the discussion. This can be recorded on paper under each attribute card.
- Jointly compose a description using the chosen attributes.
- Continue the activity during the term until the children are familiar with the process.
- Judge the children's level of language and familiarity with the description framework before asking them to write independently.

DESCRIPTION CHART:

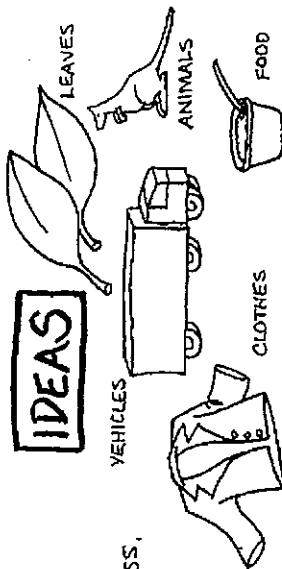


A description chart provides a framework for children to identify the features of an object and learn the language of description.

Attach attribute cards with velcro or blu-tack.

Add or delete cards to suit the topic or item.

IDEAS



letter writing

WHEN TO START?

- the first day of school,
or at least today.

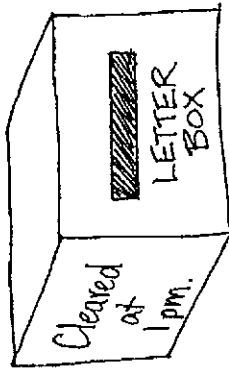


Set up a letter writing table.
Encourage children to write and
deliver their own letters.

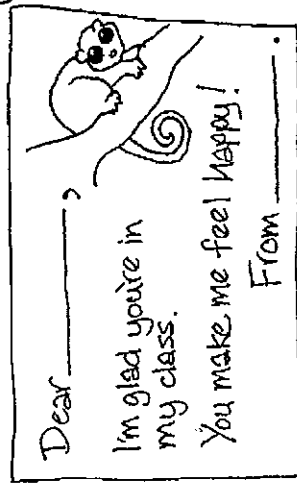
Display card with one pocket for each child.

| | | | |
|-----|-------|------|-------|
| Tim | Sue | Tom | Sam |
| Lee | Joan | Ben | Sam |
| Joe | Carol | Mark | Janet |

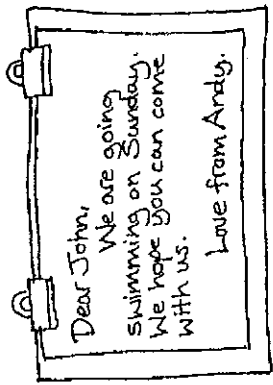
Write on
special
shaped
pages.



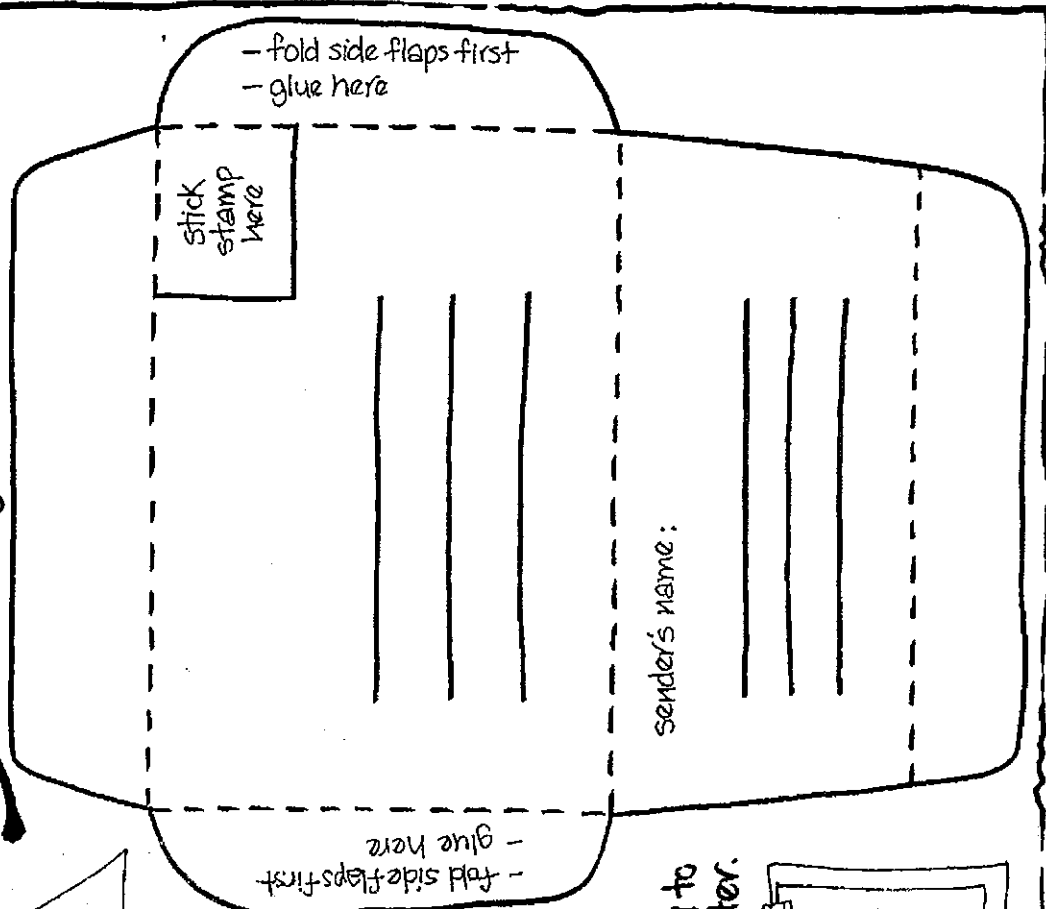
Photocopy a postcard
for each child.



Model how to
write a letter.



Make your own envelope.
Cut along ---
Fold along ----



Spelling

